

Spirituality versus Materialism

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Introduction

In the month of June I travelled to America. I stayed there for about three weeks. America is composed of North America and South America. The former is developed and the latter is not. When we say ‘America’, we mean North America, which is also called the United States of America. I have been to America before but this time I stayed for longer duration, traveled to various cities and interacted with many people – Christians, Muslims, Hindus, etc.

Experiences in America

In all my interactions yet, without any exception, I found people to be negative. While I was in India, I unconsciously thought that because India was an underdeveloped country, people here lived in complaints.

But to my surprise, I discovered that people in developed country were negative too. America is the most developed place; however, people there too live in negativity. There has been immense development in America – everything is of high standard; yet people are negative. I wanted to know the reason behind this phenomenon. I remembered the following saying of Jesus Christ:

“Man cannot live by bread alone.”

Here, ‘bread’ refers to material progress. However much material progress one attains, one won’t receive satisfaction. This is because our being exists at two levels – physical and spiritual. If we concentrate on the former alone, the latter will remain underdeveloped. Be it India or America, though people are materially well off, yet spiritually they are living in dissatisfaction.

How to rid ourselves of negativity and get spiritual satisfaction?

In order to maintain positivity, man must first understand the Creation Plan of God. God created man as an idealist. We all are idealists. This nature in human beings has been kept so that they become seekers of Paradise, but man starts yearning for the ideal in the present world itself. But as per God’s scheme of things, ideal cannot be achieved in the present world. Misuse of freedom by man creates all kinds of problems in the society.

Even a prophet cannot make an ideal society, as there will always remain a person who will misuse his freedom. Thus, man is in a very sensitive (nazuk) situation. That is, man is destined to live in a contradiction: he seeks idealism but doesn't attain it. We should know that we can be idealists in our minds but cannot achieve it in the society. It is not possible to establish idealism in the society. Hence, the case of man is thus: An idealist, who has to live in a non-ideal society. In other words, man has to live in a contradiction: *Ek ideal-pasand insaan ko ghair ideal-pasand society mein rehna padta hai*. We have to therefore, learn the art of contradiction management.

If we want to live with a peaceful mind, we have to learn the art of contradiction management. A European scholar had said that man has immense capacity. He said: "*I am large enough to contain all these contradictions.*" Thus God created man such that he can live in a society marred with contradictions.

Managing contradictions

Social scientists live in the dream of developing an ideal society. I don't regard social science as science because they have unrealistically put into people's minds the idea that the society can be made ideal. The following is an illustration.

I found a reference in today's paper. A team went to Kashmir and one of its members has written: '*Kashmir wants solution but not with gun.*' These are only beautiful words. The army will never leave Kashmir, as trained militants from the neighbouring country infiltrate into India on a regular basis. In such a situation, how can the army be removed? Therefore not wanting the army to be stationed is imaginary thinking (*khayali baat*). The solution will have to be found with the gun being there.

In the case of Palestine, the Arabs say: '*We want peace [with Israel] but along with justice.*' This is not possible either. When Israel is being bombed, how is it possible that it removes its army? When Muslim-led NGO's launch missiles and rockets at it, Israel will naturally retaliate. It has to be understood that justice doesn't come with peace.

Peace only gives opportunities, and nothing else. To get justice, one has to avail the opportunities that peace has brought.

The unrealistic condition

To insist on justice with peace is satanic politics. Satan has entangled people in wanting the fulfillment of those conditions which are impossible and can never be met. When Satan was asked to bow in front of Adam, he refused saying he was superior to Adam. He was ready to bow in front of God but not before Adam. This condition was tantamount to wanting God to abolish His Plan of settling Adam on the earth. Thus, Satan put a condition that couldn't be fulfilled.

I told American Muslims that they didn't have patriotism for America. In one of the gatherings, a senior person said that since they had migrated, they still harboured love for their home countries. However, the younger generation, which was born and brought up in America, loved the country. I was then made to meet a young boy who lived in America, was born and brought up there and even spoke with an American accent. I asked him whether he loved America.

He said he did love America. I asked him: "What is love?" He replied that love is a feeling. I said, "No, love is strong affection." I then asked him whether he loved America in this way, that is, whether he had strong affection for America? He then said: "How can I have strong affection for America when it bombards Muslim countries. America goes against human rights." I told the boy that he was wrong. I said: "America has not only bombarded Muslim countries, but also countries like Vietnam, etc. Then why aren't you worried about that?"

I explained to him that he was looking at the situation from the perspective of Muslim rights and not human rights. The father of this boy came forward and said that his son did have patriotism for America. In order to explain this, he said that last year, he took his son with him to Pakistan. There the boy said that he was missing America. This to the father was the proof of his son's patriotism towards America.

I told him that he was again making a mistake. In Pakistan, the boy was only missing the comfortable life of America, the life which he did not find in Pakistan.

It is critical to understand that Satan puts a condition in every incident - a condition which cannot be fulfilled. In the case of Adam, Satan's condition sought that God ends His Plan of making Adam superior to him. He should have accepted God's Plan and bowed to Adam. This is the tendency of Satan and he has entangled the entire world into it.

Likewise, the present-day Muslims have put such conditions that cannot be fulfilled. For example, if Muslims in India want that BJP and RSS cease to exist, this is not possible, as there is democracy in India. Muslims don't want cartoons to be published about their Messenger, but this too will happen.

Ungrateful man

During my visit to America, I understood a very important phenomenon concerning both Muslims and non-Muslims: they are recipients of many big blessings for which they can do great shukr [*thankfulness*] but they choose to become negative because of one small thing.

The Prophet of Islam said,

"I am a divine gift for mankind."

This Hadith means that for thousands of years, God had been sending Prophets for man's guidance. But man ridiculed the messengers and declared their message false. Thus, history of no messenger is available in records. The authentic guidance sent by God through the messengers didn't get recorded in history. God then intervened in history and created such conditions that a prophet arises and does that work which couldn't happen through other prophets: that is, an authentic version of divine guidance get recorded and preserved. This happened through Prophet Muhammad. The life of Prophet Muhammad got preserved and the life of Sahaba got preserved. Therefore, we can get to know the Prophet of Islam in the way his contemporaries knew him, as his life is authentically recorded.

In my youth age I wanted to know the truth: why I was created, the purpose of my life, etc. I wanted to know the authentic source of truth. This is the problem of every man. That is, to know the guidance that has come down from the Creator so that he can live with conviction. I came to know this when I read the life of the Prophet through authentic records. The life of the other prophets remained unrecorded and came to be known through fictional accounts and mythology, while for the Prophet of Islam, the Quran says:

“It may well be that your Lord will raise you to a station of praise and glory.” (17:79).

In this verse, the word that has come for ‘station of praise’ is ‘*maqam-e-mahmood*,’ (*taarif kiya hua maqam*.) The verse means that Prophet of Islam will become a historically acknowledged prophet.

The greatest thing that man seeks is historically established guidance. God made this available through Prophet Muhammad. That’s why Prophet said: *“I am divine gift to mankind.”* God intervened in the case of the Prophet of Islam and then a historically established prophet came into existence.

Hence, the Muslims have a great blessing in these recorded sources: the *Quran*, the *Seerah*, the *Hadith*, *Asar* (Sahaba’s lives). This is such a great blessing for Muslims that they should forget everything else. Instead, the Muslims remember all small issues and remain negative. What Muslims have is what all mankind wants, but because they are unaware of it, they only complain. When I discovered Islam in this way, every other thing became sundry to me. I read newspapers everyday and hear of negative news, but I maintain my positivity. This is because something billion times greater than these is with me, and that is, *the authentic version of truth*.

During Prophet’s time, the Battle of Uhud took place. In this battle, many Sahaba died. There was a Sahabiyah in Medina called *Khansa*. She went out of Medina to enquire what had happened in Uhud as her father, her husband and her brother were involved in this. When she asked people, she was told that all her family members had died.

She then asked, “What about the Prophet?” They told her that he was alive. She then went and saw the Prophet. On seeing the Prophet alive she said,

“O Prophet of God, on finding you, I forgot all other problems.” (Seerat Ibn Hisham).

That is, every problem became insignificant to her when she got to know that the Prophet was alive. This feeling should be there within the Muslims in a bigger way: they have historically established truth so everything else should be insignificant for them. So is the case with me: I put everything in God’s section. But Muslims are not aware of what they have.

The difference between ideal and practical

In America, a huge gathering of Muslims was organized and I was asked to address the audience. I interacted with many people there who belonged to various strata of the society but found that all of them were sad. None of them lived in conviction, but in frustration. Let me explain why. The Muslims go to America and do *milli* or community work. Upon seeing that their goal couldn’t be achieved and that they couldn’t change their children, they succumb to frustration. This observation made me discover another thing: *one is ideology and the other is practical result*. For instance, the founders of Jamia Millia Islamia died in frustration because their goal was to make a truthful human being and a good Muslim and they failed in achieving his target. I discovered that *if you live at the level of ideology, you won’t have frustration but if you live at the level of practical result, you will be frustrated*. This is a very important point.

This has been the case of all. For example, the Communists thought that Communism was the ideal ideology and Communist society was the ideal society. But this couldn’t be realized. A Communist leader even wrote a book titled, “*Revolution Betrayed*.” However, it was not a case of betrayal but of their goal of achieving an ideal society, which was not possible at all.

I went to America and met the director of an Islamic center. He said very jubilantly that he had taken up the role of leadership. However, now he has left America and has returned to Pakistan because he failed in his task. Thus, you can be ideal at the level of your mind but not at the level of the society.

If I expect all members of my team to be very excellent, I'll also get frustration. But this is not my goal. I think ideally at the level of my mind and at the level of human beings, I am practical.

Muslims think why America intervenes in Muslim countries' issues. But, America will inevitably do that. This condition of America not interfering in Muslim countries cannot be fulfilled. All Arabs say: 'America is Enemy Number One of Islam.' Because, they want America to not side with the Jews, not intervene with Iraq and Afghanistan. But all this is not possible, America will follow its interest and therefore it will continue to interfere. Satan has put such conditions in people's minds that can never be fulfilled. Suicide bombing is the culmination of this kind of negative thinking. This is the reason why dawah work is not happening.

While we were in America, a huge container came outside the house of Khaja Kaleemuddin, our host. The container was there to deliver a shipment from India containing several boxes of the Quran. The unloading of these boxes began and the process continued for a long time. I told Kaleem Sb: "*You have created a dawah industry here!*"

Conclusion

For Muslims, everyone is their *madu* and hating the *madu* is not legitimate in Islam. If you hate the *madu* you cannot do dawah work. If for instance, a businessman starts hating his customers he won't be able to do business, that's why the rule is: *Customer is always right*. A businessman must adopt a customer-friendly behavior to flourish. Similarly, as dayees we must adopt *madu-friendly behavior* in order to do dawah work.

On the contrary, the present-day Muslims are negative for everyone. This negativity comes for a price, which is that they are not able to develop the spirit for fulfilling their greatest responsibility – of doing dawah work. The Quran says:

"O Messenger, deliver whatever has been sent down to you by your Lord. If you do not do so, you will not have conveyed His message." (5:67)

It is critical to understand that if the Prophet doesn't do dawah work, his Prophethood becomes doubtful. Prophet Muhammad was last in the chain of Prophets. Now, no more prophets will come but the mission of the prophets will continue till the end of this world. This mission will therefore be executed by the followers of Prophet Muhammad. Hence, in the case of Muslims, there being a Muslim depends upon them performing the dawah work and continuing the dawah mission of the Prophet Muhammad. Otherwise their being ummat-e-muhammadi is doubtful. This is a very serious issue.

The present-day Muslims hate all others because of insignificant issues. Muslims will have to unilaterally erase their negativity so that dawah spirit arises in them. Hatred means that one doesn't have madu-friendly behavior. All Muslims have the feeling of well-wishing for Muslims but not for others. They consider Muslims as their own and the rest as 'others,' whom they call as '*ghair qaum*.' With such mindset, how will there be a spirit for doing dawah work (*dawati jazbah*)?

During one of my addresses in America, a young boy created uproar. After the lecture, he stood up and started speaking loudly. The moderator of the session was the Imam of the mosque and he tried to silence him. But the boy refused to listen to him and walked up to the stage and said about me: "He cited the Prophet ten times and did not say 'peace be upon him!'" This is another example of how the present-day Muslims are unaware of the model set by the Prophet and his companions. Abu Bakr said after Prophet's death:

"Who was worshipping Muhammad should know that Muhammad is dead, and who was worshipping God should know that God is alive."

Abu Bakr didn't say '*Peace be upon him*,' because saying so doesn't affect the decision of one's paradise or hell. In stark contrast, the Muslims have no qualms in abandoning dawah work, which for them is a mandatory responsibility to discharge. This is because they are filled with hatred for the madu. It is to suit their false pride that they want that people add this phrase after the name of the Prophet. It is unfortunate that the Muslims have no concern for continuing the Prophet's mission and accomplishing dawah work. This is a very dangerous thing and on the Judgment Day, the Muslims have to be answerable for not doing dawah work.